

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 1. (Currently amended) An electronic manual search system comprising:
2 an electronic manual composed of a plurality of topics;
3 a reference number table which stores, for each topic, a reference number
4 expressing how many times the topic has been referred to by a user, wherein the
5 reference number is automatically generated and records the number of times the
6 respective topic in the past was referred to as a search result;
7 a search process unit which searches contents in order based on the
8 reference number with priority given to topics having a reference number that is
9 large; and
10 a search result display unit which displays topics which resulted from the
11 search process unit, in order based on the reference number.

2. (Previously Canceled)

1 3. (Previously Presented) The electronic manual search system of claim 1
2 further comprising a reference number update unit which increments by one the
3 reference number of a topic when the user selects and/or refers to the topic among
4 topics which are displayed by the search result display unit.

1 4. (Previously Presented) The electronic manual search system of claim 1
2 further comprising a reference number update unit which increments by one the
3 reference number of a topic displayed immediately before the user stops
4 displaying of the search results.

1 5. (Previously Presented) The electronic manual search system of claim 1,
2 wherein the order of displaying the searched parts is a descending order of the
3 reference number of the topics.

1 6. (Previously Presented) The electronic manual search system of claim 1,
 2 wherein the order of searching is a descending order of the reference number of
 3 the topics.

1 7. (Previously Presented) The electronic manual search system of claim 1,
 2 wherein the reference number table is incorporated into the electronic manual.

1 8. (Previously Presented) The electronic manual search system of claim 1,
 2 wherein the reference number table stores the reference number for each user class.

1 9. (Currently Amended) An electronic manual search system comprising:
 2 an electronic manual which is composed of a plurality of topics;
 3 a reference number table which stores, for each topic, a reference number
 4 expressing the number of times the topic has been referred to by a user, wherein
 5 the reference number is automatically generated and records the number of times the
 6 respective topic in the past was referred to as a search result; and
 7 a search process unit which searches contents for satisfying a search
 8 condition in order based on the reference number with priority given to topics
 9 having a reference number that is large.

1 10. (Currently Amended) A method of searching an electronic manual
 2 which is composed of a plurality of topics, the method comprising the steps of:
 3 storing, for each topic, a reference number expressing the number of times
 4 the topic was referred to by a user, wherein the reference number is
 5 automatically generated and records the number of times the respective topic in the
 6 past has been referred to;
 7 searching contents of the topics based on a search condition; wherein the
 8 searching step searches contents in order based on the reference number with
 9 priority given to topics having a reference number that is large; and
 10 displaying topics which result from the searching step, in order based on the
 11 reference number.

D1

11. (Previously Canceled)

1 12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the order of
2 displaying the searched topics is a descending order of the reference number of the
3 topics.

1 13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the order of
2 searching is a descending order of the reference number of the topics.

1 14. (Currently amended) A recording medium readable by a computer,
2 tangibly embodying an electronic manual, comprising:
3 a plurality of topics; and
4 a reference number of each topic, the reference number representing the
5 number of times the corresponding topic was referred to as searched results,
6 wherein the reference number is automatically generated and records the number of
7 times the respective topic has been referred to; wherein contents of each topic are
8 searchable in order based on the reference number such that priority may be given to
9 topics having a reference number that is large.

1 15. (Previously Presented) The recording medium of claim 14, wherein the
2 reference number is stored for each class of a user who refers to the topic as
3 searched results.

1 16. (Previously Presented) The recording medium of claim 17, further
2 comprising: displaying topics which are obtained by the searching step as search
3 results, in order based on the reference number.

17. (Currently Amended) A recording medium readable by a computer, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the computer to perform a method of searching an electronic manual which is composed of a plurality of topics, the method comprising the steps of:

storing, for each part, a reference number expressing how many times the topic has been referred to by a user, wherein the reference number is automatically generated and records the number of times the respective topic in the past has been referred to; and

searching contents of the topics for satisfying a search condition in order based on the reference number with priority given to topics having a reference number that is large.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave and representing a sequence of instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform the actions of:

storing, for each topic of an electronic manual, a reference number expressing how many times the topic is referred to by a user, wherein the reference number is automatically generated and records the number of times the respective topic in the past has been referred to;

searching contents of the topics based on a search condition; wherein contents of each topic are searched in order based on the reference number with priority given to topics having a reference number that is large; and

displaying topics which are obtained by the searching step as search results, in order based on the reference number.

D1

19. (Currently Amended) A program product comprising, computer readable instructions and a recording medium bearing the computer readable instructions; the instructions being adaptable to enable a computer to operate according to the steps of:

storing, for each topic of an electronic manual, a reference number expressing the number of times the topic is referred to by a user, wherein the reference number is automatically generated and records the number of times the respective topic in the past has been referred to;

searching contents of the topics based on a search condition; wherein the searching is in order based on the reference number with priority given to topics having a reference number that is large; and

displaying parts which result from the searching step, in order based on the reference number.

D2

20. (New) An electronic dictionary search system comprising:

an electronic dictionary composed of a plurality of topics;

a reference number table which stores, for each topic, a reference number expressing how many times the topic has been referred to by a user, wherein the reference number is automatically generated and records the number of times the respective topic in the past was referred to as a search result;

a search process unit which searches contents in order based on the reference number with priority given to topics having a reference number that is large; and

a search result display unit which displays topics which resulted from the search process unit, in order based on the reference number.

D2

1 21. (New) An electronic dictionary search system comprising:
2 an electronic dictionary which is composed of a plurality of topics;
3 a reference number table which stores, for each topic, a reference number
4 expressing the number of times the topic has been is referred to by a user, wherein
5 the reference number is automatically generated and records the number of times
6 the respective topic in the past was referred to as a search result; and
7 a search process unit which searches contents for satisfying a search
8 condition in order based on the reference number with priority given to topics
 having a reference number that is large.

1 22. (New) The electronic manual search system of claim 1, wherein a plurality
2 of users can share the electronic manual search system by using the Internet or an in-
3 house LAN.
